

THINGS TO STOP AND START STUDY FIVE

Stop Worrying and Start Trusting

Philippians 4:4–9

Rejoice in the Lord every day. Release your burdens to Him every day. Relax in His peace every day. When you turn your worries over to the Lord, He removes the burden and gives you in its place, peace.

—Charles R. Swindoll

ONE of the most precious words in the lexicon of any language is *freedom*. We all want freedom, treasure it, even fight for it! Its source is God Himself, who stamped freedom's imprint on the basic elements of the human soul—the mind, heart, and will.

- He made us with minds that we might *think* freely.
- He made us with hearts that we might *love* freely.
- He made us with wills that we might *obey* freely.

The Lord didn't create us as “people puppets” with no wills of our own. He designed us as free beings who can choose our own way . . . ideally, to choose the way, the truth, and the life that is found in Christ (John 14:6). Nothing brings God more pleasure and glory than when we freely love and follow His Son.

Ironically, freedom's road can also lead us to bondage. Free to choose wrong as well as right, we can make choices that eventually lock us in a self-made prison called addiction—the tragic dead end of freedom out of control.

In this study, we'll examine an addiction that we might not typically think of as an addiction, but it is perhaps the most universal of all bad habits and the most stubborn to break: *worry!*



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Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

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Do you sometimes feel you can't break free from constant fretting about this or that? Worry's chains are heavy and can bind our hearts with fear. Thankfully, from the beginning, Christ's mission has been to set captives free (Luke 4:16–21). And He offers this promise to sin's prisoners: "If the Son sets you free, you are truly free" (John 8:36). Jesus really can help us *stop worrying and start trusting* as He transforms our fear into faith. Let's find out how!



PREPARE YOUR HEART

What worries have been weighing heavy on your heart lately? Jot down a few of them here.

In a few moments of quiet prayer, invite the Lord to come alongside you to share your burden. Mention each of these concerns to Him. As you read the following verse, ask the Lord to help you release your worries to Him through this study and thank Him for His care.

Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you. (1 Peter 5:7)



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Read the following verses and look for four streams of thought that Chuck Swindoll identified in his message: rejoice, release, relax, and respond.

Rejoice

Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again—rejoice! Let everyone see that you are considerate in all you do. Remember, the Lord is coming soon. (Philippians 4:4–5)

Release

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. (4:6)



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Relax

Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:7)

Respond

And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. Keep putting into practice all you learned and received from me—everything you heard from me and saw me doing. Then the God of peace will be with you. (4:8–9)

The four concepts expressed in these verses sum up what we might call God's therapy for worry-free living.



Observation: Living Worry-Free

In the *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, Chuck Swindoll recommends digging into the circumstances surrounding the writing of a Bible passage.¹ Paul briefly mentioned his circumstances in *Philippians 1:7*. You can find out more about Paul's situation in the notes of Philippians in The *Swindoll Study Bible*. Chuck's commentary, *Swindoll's Living Insights: Insights on Colossians, Philippians, Philemon*, can fill in some details as well. For an online resource, read the introduction to Philippians in Constable's Notes at NETBible.org. Write down the background information you find about Paul's situation during the time he wrote on the subject of worry.



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Prisoner Paul had plenty of reasons to fret as he awaited his day in court before Caesar. And yet, he was at peace. Rome was holding him captive but *not worry!* His heart was as free as the birds flying outside his cell window. How could that be? Every day, he was following God’s plan to get rid of the worry habit. Releasing worry liberated the apostle, and it can liberate us too!

Rejoice in the Lord—Philippians 4:4–5

God’s first word of counsel in His program for worry-holics is this: “Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again—rejoice!” (Philippians 4:4).

What truth about Christ could Paul count on to always fill him with joy? For the answer, read *Philippians 4:5* in the New Living Translation and the New American Standard Bible.

The Greek word for “coming soon” or “near” is *eggus*, a word rich with meaning that we’ll explore in the interpretation phase. For now, let’s observe God’s next word of counsel.

Release Your Burdens Every Day—Philippians 4:6

With our focus heavenward, we’re ready to take the second step. Read *Philippians 4:6* and write down the instructions you observe in this verse. What specific directions do you read about prayer?



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The only way to break a bad habit is to replace it with a better habit. *Daily worries melt away in the healing practice of daily prayer.* Right now, take a moment to practice prayer therapy by telling the Lord what you need and releasing that need to Him. Then offer thanks for all that He has done for you.

Lay your pack on the Lord and He will bless you. He will relieve you. Drop that heavy-hearted load off your shoulders. Give it to Him. Give it to Him. Release your burden every day. —Chuck Swindoll

Relax in the Peace of Christ—Philippians 4:7

Rejoicing leads to releasing, which flows into the next step in God's plan: *relaxing*. What does *Philippians 4:7* say? Observe this verse closely to find any connections with the previous verses and any cause-and-effect statements.

In this world, only Christ has God's peace to give—and He gives it freely! He said to His followers:

"I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid." (John 14:27)

This same peace that soothed Jesus in His most difficult hours, even allowing Him to sleep during a storm (Mark 4:35–40), is available to us. When God's peace guards our hearts and minds and keeps fear outside the gate, it is possible to rest during life's troubles—it really is!



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If the peace of God surrounds you, it's amazing what it does to your mind and your heart. Place your problems before Him daily, and He will march guard duty around you with a peace you can't explain. —Chuck Swindoll

Respond by Focusing Your Thoughts on the Right Things—Philippians 4:8–9

The final step is to focus on what's right rather than on how bad things are. What does Paul encourage us to fix our minds on according to *Philippians 4:8–9*?

Worries multiply when we dwell on what's false, dishonorable, wrong, impure, ugly, and unadmirable. But where in this broken world can we find what's worthy to think about? We can always focus our attention on the One who is the embodiment of all that's right and good. Keep your mind on Christ, for He is always near!



Interpretation: The Lord Is Near

“The Lord is near” (Philippians 4:5 NASB). Of all the encouraging thoughts in this passage, perhaps the most reassuring is the nearness of Christ. Interestingly, the New Living Translation translates the sentence differently: “Remember, the Lord is coming soon” (4:5). Which is the correct translation?

The Greek word, *eggus*, can mean either “near” (for example: “The LORD is close to all who call on him” [Psalm 145:18]) or “coming soon” (for example: “the coming of the Lord is near” [James 5:8]).² Which is the intended meaning here?

Bible scholars suggest the word hints at *both* meanings. Jesus (not Caesar) is the true judge who will vindicate suffering believers when He returns. Jesus is coming someday . . . but He is also near us now. Both our future and our present are secure. Think of it this way: *Christ is the light on our horizon . . . and the warmth in our hearts!*



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Look up the analysis of this verse in the online resource, *The IVP New Testament Commentary Series*, at NETBible.org, and write down what you discover.



Correlation: Warning and Directives

In the correlation phase, we compare the meaning of one biblical passage to another. Read the following passages and write down the encouragement you find.

Isaiah 26:3–4

Matthew 6:25–34



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Certainly, prison life was no laughing matter for Paul, and neither are our trials. Even so, despite his dreadful circumstances, Paul could rejoice when he took his eyes off the four walls of his cell and focused on His Lord. Let's follow Paul's example by *rejoicing* in the nearness of Christ, *releasing* our worries, *relaxing* in God's peace, and *responding* to our fears by dwelling on what's right and good.



Application: Learning the Secret of Moment-by-Moment Trust

Which of the four steps in God's therapy program for worriers do you find the most difficult? Rejoicing, releasing, relaxing, or responding?

Would you like to take that step right now, before you complete this study? Here is some space to share your heart with God. And don't forget to take a moment or two in quiet reflection to receive His peace as you experience Christ cutting the chains to your worries.

The wonderful hope for worry addicts is Jesus Christ. Through Him and in His power, we truly can lay our cares before God and put our confidence in God. As Isaiah prophesied, Jesus comes to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives and freedom to prisoners—this includes prisoners of worry. Experience His freedom today!



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A FINAL PRAYER

We close with a prayer from Chuck taken directly from his message. May it be your prayer today as well.

Lord, I trust You right now. I lean on You with my mind that can play tricks on me and with my heart that's given to all kinds of extremes. I ask that You enable me to so focus on You that my trust remains unshakable. —Chuck Swindoll

ENDNOTES

1. To learn about Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the Web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#)."
2. *The Strongest NASB Exhaustive Concordance* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), see "1451. eggus."



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STUDY FIVE

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

STUDY

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Tools for Digging Deeper



Things to Stop and Start
by Charles R. Swindoll
CD series



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For the 2019–2020 broadcast, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Bryce Klabunde, executive vice president of Pastoral Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.



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